Appalachian State University Staff Senate Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2014
Plemmons Student Union, 226 Linville Falls Room

Action items for Senators and Alternates:

• If you would like to volunteer or perform at this year’s Diversity Celebration (April 8), or donate to the Diversity Celebration, visit http://celebration.appstate.edu/.

• Staff Senate elections will be held at the April meeting. Submit officer nominations (for chair-elect, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, and Staff Assembly delegates) as soon as possible.

Announcements:

• Staff Senate scholarship applications are due March 15, 2014. For more information and application materials, see http://staffsenate.appstate.edu/service-projects/staff-senate-scholarships

Mark your calendar:

• Senate meeting – Mar. 11 – 224 I.G. Greer
• Senate meeting and elections – Apr. 15 – 420 Parkway Ballroom, Plemmons Student Union
• Diversity Celebration – Apr. 8 – Plemmons Student Union

Attendance:

Present: Anderson, Carol; Barbee, Diana; Berry, Elaine; Church, Lynn; Craft, Betsy; Dale, Patty; Dehus, Sydney; Eckerd, Monique; Eldreth, Chelsie; Gainey, Courtney; Grant, Tony; Hicks, Sandy; Hoffman, Kate; Love, Amy; Mann, Kathy; McCaffrey, Kerri; Mitchell, Andrea; Paige, Russell; Ray, Kathy; Roach, Roy; Sanders, Amy; Sbarbaro, Katherine; Scarborough, Barbara; Snook, Kevin; Tedder, Jamie; Tibbett, Debi; Triplett, Debbie; Trivette, Cindy; Whittington, Kathy; Ziegler, Cathy

Absent: Burleson, Sheila; Carpenter, Erin; Carter, Leslie; Deas, Kathy; Eggers, Gloria; Eller, Peggy; Gill-Johnson, Sali; Gragg, Debbie; Gryder, Alice; Harmon, Kara; Harrison, Kathy; Huffman, Julie; Hyle, Eddie; Hyle, Kristin; Jamison, David; Lambert, Jamy; Lowenberg, Diane; Lunsford, Mark; Lyons, Danna; Marsh, Clinton; McCormick, Marty; Merrell, Donna; Miller, Angie; Moore, Lisa; Parnell, Regina; Perry, Amanda; Piazza, Joseph; Probst, Elizabeth; Ragan, Greg; Saunders, Shannon; Scott, Cathy; Stocker, Thomas; Tickle, Jeff; Travis, David; Wallin, Charlie; Waters, Robin; Watson, Lisa

Excused: Bentley, Teresa Carriere, Debbie; Carter, Kim; Riedl, Tess; Smith, Janice; Young, Vickie

Guests: Lori Gonzalez; Marty Watkins
Minutes:

1) **Meeting was called to order** by Kevin Snook at 1:30pm.

2) **Approval of minutes:** Barbara Scarborough motioned to approve the January 14, 2014 minutes, seconded by Andrea Mitchell. Minutes were approved by general consent with no changes.

3) **Treasurer’s Report:** We have received our 2014 budget. Monique Eckerd motioned to approve the treasurer’s report, seconded by Lynn Church. The treasurer’s report was approved by general consent with no changes.

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4) **Guest speakers’ presentation – Provost Lori Gonzalez**
   a) Metrics for measuring the success of the Strategic Plan were distributed to the entire campus via e-mail on February 10. These metrics will affect resource allocation, so please provide feedback on these metrics. The strategic plan plan will be approved by the Board of Trustees in March and will take effect in July.
   b) The strategic direction that will impact staff most directly is “Maintaining Faculty and Staff Excellence.”
   c) Question from Kevin Snook: The Program Prioritization process has been met with some challenges. Can you talk about how we’re going forward? Lori Gonzalez: The challenges have come primarily from 2-3 departments slated to be consolidated or eliminated. The Academic Policies & Procedures council will meet next week to review these program recommendations. That council is a recommending body, so their recommendations will come to me, and the Chancellor and I will review them. Program review happens on almost every campus; it just hasn’t happened here at Appalachian before. We are going to start doing program review on a periodic basis for all programs; we will review a small number of programs every year, including academic support and non-academic support programs.
   d) Question from Katherine Sbarbaro about mission statement: There has been talk about the revision to the university mission statement that the Board of Governors suggested. Can you tell us more about that? Lori Gonzalez: We revised our mission statement and it included a
statement about Appalachian offering bachelor’s, master’s, and selected doctoral programs. We included this wording in our statement because we want to be responsive to the needs of Western North Carolina, not because we intend to change our classification as a master’s comprehensive university, but the Board of Governors honed in on this, and seemed concerned that adding more doctoral programs would dilute/distract from our strength in undergraduate education. The Board of Governors is also concerned about a new chancellor wanting to add a lot of new doctoral programs that realistically the budget would not permit. PhDs are the most expensive programs to offer, and the GA is making an effort to not duplicate programs. President Ross recommended to Appalachian’s Board of Trustees that we revise our mission statement to say that we offer only one doctoral program (our existing doctorate in Educational Leadership). Our campus sent a response to President Ross on Friday with feedback from faculty, students, and deans; feedback was generally in opposition to limiting us to one doctoral program. Gonzalez thinks that the revised mission statement will stand despite campus feedback, but we would have option to propose new doctoral programs if we had a really strong case for a new PhD program. (Example: Clinical Psychology. Carol Anderson pointed out that that the new PhD program being considered is specifically Rural Clinical Psych., which is a unique and important regional need.)

e) Academic Affairs is going to start putting out a newsletter; look for the first issue around the end of February and the second one in April.

5) Chancellor Search process:
   a) Committee met in Charlotte for airport interviews of eight candidates. The final three candidates were unanimously voted on. The Chancellor’s Cabinet and Board of Trustees are scheduling campus visits, but they will not be open meetings; they will be for the benefit of the candidates, Chancellor’s Cabinet, and Board of Trustees.
   b) Question from Monique Eckerd: Will the Board of Governors pick from those three candidates, or can they go outside that pool? Kevin Snook: They will pick from those three.
   c) Kevin Snook: It is a diverse candidate pool, all have higher education experience, and all three candidates are sought after by other universities.

6) HR Update – Angie Miller:
   a) At the last Senate meeting, Angie gave an update on SPA grievance policy that was supposed to go into effect March 1, but has since received an e-mail from the state human resources office saying that they have put the brakes on that policy due to some legal concerns that are currently under review. We do not know when the new target implementation date will be.
   b) The HR Director Search committee met today for the first time. Angie Miller is not on the search committee, but Staff Senate Chair-Elect Amy Sanders is.
   c) Affordable Care Act: The IRS has said that any employer with >101 employees who terminates an employee has to attest that the termination was not due to the ACA.
   d) New legislation is going into effect in March for recruitment of protected employee classes (veterans and people with disabilities). Hiring managers will see new advice coming out in March about protections required for those applicants.
e) Retiree enrollment in State Health Plan and Medicare Advantage Plans is still challenging. HR receives 20-30 calls per day from retirees.

f) Question from Kevin Snook about Optional Retirement Program: Can you explain the e-mail about the Optional Retirement Program that went out recently? Angie Miller: The Optional Retirement Program’s 401a status requires a periodic IRS renewal process. As part of that process, the IRS requires you to send out this announcement; the language is strictly regulated, and is confusing. The ORP plan is not at risk.

g) Question from Kevin Snook about adverse weather closings: I have heard that when Appalachian State closes the campus for adverse weather, we get pushback/scrutiny from Raleigh that other campuses do not receive. Angie Miller – Historically, the state of North Carolina has viewed adverse weather in the western part of the state differently. The policy is set up so that the Chancellors have delegated authority to make their own decision for their campus; the only requirement is that the closing be reported to the Office of State Human Resources within five days. When we reported a recent closing—which was decided in consultation with President Ross—OSHR said that ASU should require staff to make up the time. However, authority to make this decision does not lie with OSHR, and employees are not required to make up time for this recent closing.

h) Amy Sanders: Since so much of the adverse weather policy relies on the ability of employees to make their own decisions about whether it is safe for them to come in during adverse weather, it is very important to let Human Resources know if the policy is not being followed and you feel you are being pressured to come to work during adverse whether when you do not feel safe doing so (e.g., if your supervisor is not open to you choosing to use vacation time because you do not feel safe coming in).

7) Committee Updates
   a) Scholarship Committee –
      i) Chelsie Eldreth: Dining card sales have gone well. We started with 125 cards; we have 6 left. We are in a good position financially for awarding scholarships.
      ii) Kathy Mann: The new Staff Senate scholarship application is now on the website (no major changes from website: http://staffsenate.appstate.edu/service-projects/staff-senate-scholarships. Applications are due March 15, and you do have to have all required information in at that time, so encourage potential applicants to start early.
      iii) Kevin Snook: The Scholarship Committee asked the officers to review the by-laws to find out why there are some scholarships that can only go to dependents, not current state employees. We think the restriction may be related to (a) rules about the use of state funds vs. foundation funds, since we have scholarship funds in each type of account, and (b) regulations about SPA employee pay, if a scholarship would be considered supplemental pay. The Executive Committee will do more research about why this is the case and whether it is possible to change it.

b) AppKIDS: Cindy Trivette is the new AppKIDS committee chair.

8) Old Business
Staff Senate elections are coming up in April and we will be accepting nominations for officers. Please contact any current officer if you are thinking about running for an office.

b) Question from Kathy Mann – There was some discussion of providing a stipend or some other type of support for the Senate Chair, since it is so time-consuming. What is the status of this? Kevin Snook: Katherine Sbarbaro and I are still working on this; some universities provide it.

9) New Business
a) Resolution: The appended resolution in support of the original mission statement was introduced. Cathy Ziegler motioned to approve the resolution. Kathy Ray seconded. The resolution was approved by voice vote.

b) Staff Assembly – Month of Service (Used to be Have a Heart Campaign):
   i) Kevin Snook – We usually do a food drive, but could do different/additional service activities.
   ii) Katherine Sbarbaro – Some universities do a wide variety of activities throughout the month. It would be nice to do something different.
   iii) Tony Grant will contact the ACT office for advice about service opportunities.
   iv) Katherine Sbarbaro – OASIS is always looking for volunteers. Could we work out something to use community service leave time and do something for them?
   v) Snook – We also need volunteers to coordinate the food drive.

c) Staff Senate operating budget – Suggestions for use of 2014 funds:
   i) Sandy Hicks – Pay for staff to obtain CPR training or notary training.
   ii) Katherine Sbarbaro – Could we get parking passes as incentives for people to serve as Staff Senate officers?
   iii) E-mail any additional suggestions to Kevin Snook.

d) HR Director Search Committee update – Amy Sanders:
   i) The search committee recently met for the first time. We are starting to finalize a job description. If anyone has input on what they would like to see in an HR Director, e-mail Amy Sanders.

10) Adjournment: The business meeting adjourned at 2:36pm and was followed by open discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Love, Secretary